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Carol X Weakley 10/06/2006 02:50:14 PM From DB/Inbox: Carol X Weakley

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Text:

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 03937

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ACTION: ECON  
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DISSEMINATION: ECON  
CHARGE: PROG

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INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 003937

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/05/2016  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#)  
SUBJECT: PEACE NOW REPORT DETAILS CONSTRUCTION IN ILLEGAL  
OUTPOSTS AND SETTLEMENTS

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

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Construction Boom in Outposts  
And Settlements Continues  
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11. (C) The Ambassador on October 4 raised the recently-published Peace Now report on construction in illegal outposts and settlements with BGen (ret.) Baruch Spiegel and Ministry of Defense (MOD) Senior Adviser Haggai Alon.
12. (U) Peace Now published a report on October 2 detailing extensive growth in illegal outposts in the West Bank from April-August 2006. According to the report, various types of construction are taking place in outposts across the West Bank, including the paving of roads, construction of water reservoirs, addition of mobile homes, and leveling of ground. The report also states that construction of permanent homes and other structures is ongoing in Gva'ot Olam, Hanekuda, Tekoa B and C, Kiryat Arba South, Pnei Kedem, Zayit Ra'anan, Kida, Mitzpe Ha'ai, Mitzpe Kramim, Palgei Mayim, Givat Haroel, Haresha, Bruchin, and Neve Erez outposts. The report points out that the outpost of Yitav East near Jericho was evacuated during this period, but it was an uninhabited outpost with three mobile homes.
13. (U) Peace Now reported that the majority of construction -- many hundreds of housing units -- taking place from April-August 2006 in established settlements is in the main settlement blocs, Beitar Illit (Gush Etzion bloc), Ma'ale Adumim, Modi'in Illit, and Alfei Menashe's Givat Tal expansion (Ariel bloc). The settlements with "medium" construction, which Peace Now defines as many dozens to a few hundred housing units, are in Givat Ze'ev (north of Jerusalem), Ariel (Ariel bloc), and Efrata, Alon, Elazar, and Rosh Tzurim (Gush Etzion bloc) settlements. In addition, a

few dozen housing units, mainly private homes, are being built in 25 other settlements.

14. (C) Yariv Oppenheimer, secretary general of Peace Now, told econoffs on September 29 that he met with MOD officials two weeks ago, along with other non-governmental organizations, to discuss the outposts phenomenon. He said that he did not get the sense that the MOD is prepared to tackle the problem because it does not want to see soldiers fighting settlers after the Lebanon war. He opined that although nine houses were demolished at Amona outpost at the beginning of the year, the settlers won in the long-run because the GOI is afraid to pit soldiers against settlers yet again. "This is the real victory of Amona," according to Oppenheimer.

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MOD Response  
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15. (C) Spiegel responded to the Ambassador's query saying that the MOD is fully aware of the illegal construction in the West Bank, and that this is an issue that Defense Minister Amir Peretz will be handling in the near future in coordination with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. Spiegel claimed that the MOD has "100 percent coverage" of the West Bank, and that "very high levels" in the GOI are concerned about what is taking place. To address Israel's commitments to the USG on settlements and outposts, the MOD is forming a team of eight or nine people, which will include Alon, Mike Herzog (Yitzhak Herzog's brother), and Lt. Col. Oded Herman, which will study the issues, according to Spiegel. The Ambassador pointed out that this is a question of rule of law for Israel, and emphasized that enforcement of the law should not be seen by the GOI as a concession to Palestinians. He asked whether Peretz's demolition orders for 47 illegal structures in outposts would still be carried out in mid-October after the Sukkot holidays. Spiegel demurred and suggested that the Ambassador raise this issue with Peretz. The Ambassador asked about the 39 illegal structures in Palestinian villages that are also scheduled to be demolished, and Spiegel said these would take place. The Ambassador commented that he supports equal enforcement of the law, noting that the Palestinians should have the same ability to obtain building permits as Israelis.

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